

We have discussed with President Bush about free trade and openness. I'm a true believer that free trade generates openness and opportunities for the low income people. President Bush was always a strong leader to push CAFTA through.

We have also spoken about the support that the United States has given us, especially on the security issue. The President has seen with good eyes the security—the regional security plan that we have prepared. And he has asked financial support to the Congress for this plan. The President is showing a great identification with Mexico and Central America, which is also important for the stability in the United States.

We have also spoken about the Millennium Account. El Salvador is on the right track. We're improving our indicators. We're investing in our people. We're improving public security. And El Salvador is one of the countries with the greatest level of freedom in all Latin America. Our country, although small, has an investment great. And this is very important because we have built this along 18 years of hard work because no good results can come overnight. El Salvador is a society that is in its building a democratic society, open—in midst of a Latin America that is filled up with populism today. To continue on this path is the most adequate thing we can do.

I want to express my appreciation to President Bush for his support to my fellow men with the TPS. We have 240,000 Salvadorans that have been benefited with the TPS, thanks to the direct support of President Bush. And today we have spoken of how important it is for my people to be legally living here in this country.

I have also invited him to visit El Salvador, and he has promised me to be there very soon. So we're going to set up a date for that important visit.

The United States has in Central America a region that is very stable after the democratic construction. We have spoken about all the important issues, such as the fight against drug activity, the FOL that we have in El Salvador to fight drug trafficking that has allowed all the countries of Central America to capture large amounts of drugs. And the Minister Figueroa, the Minister of Security, has talked to President Bush about

the regional transnational center against gangs. El Salvador is working very well with the FBI and with all Central America. There is no doubt that the regional plan is going to be a complete success.

I have reiterated to President Bush that we share our criteria on freedom, on democracy. And he is a very strong ally of El Salvador. It is important for El Salvador to remain democratic, making its people grow, without populism and, of course, with great government responsibility. The United States has been our partner and our friend.

So thank you very much, Mr. President.  
**President Bush.** *Si.* Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:56 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. President Sacá referred to Minister of Public Security and Justice René Figueroa. President Sacá spoke in Spanish, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

### **Remarks Following a Briefing by Senior Department of Defense Officials in Arlington, Virginia November 29, 2007**

Good afternoon. Thanks for coming. I just finished briefings with Secretary Gates, Deputy Secretary England, Admiral Mullen, and the Joint Chiefs. We discussed the long-term needs of our military services and the importance of progressing with modernization.

The men and women of this Department, the Department of Defense, are helping to carry out the Government's most important duty: protecting the American people. Every day, they confront America's enemies. Every day, they work to stop the spread of dangerous weapons. And every day, they guard against those seeking to bring another day of destruction to our shores. The missions of this Department are essential to saving American lives, and they are too important to be disrupted or delayed or put at risk.

Beginning in February, I submitted detailed funding requests to the United States Congress to fund operations in the war on terror. Our military has waited on these funds for months. The funds include money to carry out combat operations against the enemy in Afghanistan and Iraq; they include

money to train the Afghan and Iraqi security forces to take on more responsibility for the defense of their countries; they include money for intelligence operations to protect our troops on the battlefield.

Pentagon officials have warned Congress that the continued delay in funding our troops will soon begin to have a damaging impact on the operations of this Department. The warning has been laid out for the United States Congress to hear.

Recently, Secretary Gates sought to clear up any misperception that the Department can fund our troops for an indefinite period simply by shifting money around. In fact, Congress limits how much money can be moved from one account to the other. Secretary Gates has already notified Congress that he will transfer money from accounts used to fund other activities of the military services to pay for current operations in Iraq and Afghanistan—and no more money can be moved. So he has directed the Army and Marine Corps to develop a plan to lay off civilian employees, to terminate contracts, and to prepare our military bases across the country for reduced operations. These are contingency steps that a prudent manager must take.

Secretary Gates and America's senior military officials have made a reasoned case to Congress for the funds they need to keep the military running. They have carefully explained the need to plan prudently should those funds not be forthcoming. Secretary Gates puts it this way: "The Defense Department is like the world's biggest supertanker. It cannot turn on a dime, and I cannot steer it like a skiff."

The American people expect us to work together to support our troops. That's what they want. They do not want the Government to create needless uncertainty for those defending our country and uncertainty for their families. They do not want disputes in Washington to undermine our troops in Iraq just as they're seeing clear signs of success.

Here in Washington, leaders have a responsibility to send the right message to the rest of the world. Let us tell our enemies that America will do what it takes to defeat them. Let us tell Afghans and Iraqis that we will stand with them as they take the fight

to our common enemies. Let us tell our men and women in uniform that we will give them what they need to succeed in their missions, without strings and without delay.

I ask Congress to provide this essential funding to our troops before the Members leave on their Christmas vacation. And I thank the members of this Department for their hard work, their sacrifice, their courage, and their dedication to peace.

God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:59 p.m. at the Pentagon.

### **Statement on the Death of Former Representative Henry J. Hyde**

*November 29, 2007*

Laura and I are deeply saddened by the death of former Congressman Henry Hyde. From his service in the Navy during World War II until his retirement from the U.S. House of Representatives last year, Henry Hyde led a life devoted to public service. During more than 30 years as a Congressman, he represented the people of Illinois with character and dignity and always stood for a strong and purposeful America. This fine man believed in the power of freedom, and he was a tireless champion of the weak and forgotten. He used his talents to build a more hopeful America and promote a culture of life. Earlier this month, in recognition of his good and purposeful life, I was proud to award Henry Hyde the Medal of Freedom.

Congressman Hyde's passing represents a great loss to the people of Illinois and our Nation, and our thoughts and prayers are with his family in this sad hour.

### **Proclamation 8207—World AIDS Day, 2007**

*November 29, 2007*

*By the President of the United States  
of America*

#### **A Proclamation**

On World AIDS Day, we reaffirm our commitment to fighting and preventing HIV/